Fire at National Chemical Laboratory

459. SHRI KAILASH JOSHI: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether a major fire broke out at Pune's National Chemical Laboratory;

(b) if so, the details thereof together with the cause of fire and the injuries sustained by trapped scientists;

(c) whether any inquiry has been conducted in this regard; if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the steps taken to prevent recurrence of such incidents?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI BACHI SINGH RAWAT): (a) to (c) On 12.1.2003, a fire of a minor nature broke out in one of the rooms in the Organic Chemistry Technology Division of National Chemical Laboratory (NCL), Pune. This room was damaged but neither any scientist was trapped in the fire nor any serious injuries were sustained by any person. Director NCL constituted a seven member expert Committee under a senior Scientist of NCL to investigate the cause of fire. The committee observed that the fire was caused due to ignition of accumulated solvent vapour by the sparks generated from electrical short circuiting in the appliances, located in the vicinity of the site of the accident.

(b) NCL has in place all safety and mechanical measures to prevent recurrence of such incidents.

Share of Private Sector in R&D

460. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the amount in terms of GDP invested in R&D by both the Private Sector as well as the Public Sector; and

(b) how Government propose to increase the share of Private Sector in R&D?